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STATE FOR WHA AND USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2016  
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: PREVAL SPEAKS: CONTINUE PROTESTS, BUT DO SO  
PEACEFULLY

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Douglas M. Griffiths for Reasons  
: 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Presidential candidate Rene Preval held a press conference February 14. Preval insisted that his party stands for peace. However, he said that the party is convinced that massive fraud took place and that if results are published in their current state, L'Espwa would legally contest. He encouraged partisans to continue protesting, but to respect the rights and property of others. It appears that Preval's words have calmed his partisans. Roadblocks along Delmas and Canape Vert are being removed. It is unlikely that final results will be made public until Preval's complaints are investigated, leading to further delay and further frustration amongst the Haitian population. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Haitian presidential front-runner Rene Preval finally broke his silence February 14 and held a press conference in Port-au-Prince, carried live on Haitian National Television and radio. Preval's campaign manager Bob Manuel accompanied him and provided intermittent Spanish and English translation for Preval's remarks in French and Creole. Preval offered condolences to those who may have been injured or killed in the events of February 13. He said that although his L'Espwa political party was verbally and physically attacked in St. Marc, Gonaives and Ouanaminthe, violence could not be answered with violence as the party's message is one of reconciliation. Preval added that when "we come to power, I will be a president for all Haitians."

¶3. (U) Preval applauded the Haitian people for displaying their maturity, enthusiasm, discipline, patience and desire to vote on February 7 remarking "citizens woke up at 2 a.m., walked for three to four hours, and waited up to six hours to exercise their civic duty." Preval said that the will of the Haitian population was shown in the early results the international press reported as well as "NDI's slow count showing L'Espwa had won." Preval said that as his lead fell incrementally "day by day, hour by hour without any explanation" and "contrary to the international results," it caused L'Espwa and the population to become angry.

Current Results to be Contested

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¶4. (SBU) Preval compared L'Espwa's campaign to the will of the Haitian people. He said that the party and the population are convinced that massive fraud took place and there were "gross errors" in the vote tabulation. Preval said he demanded an explanation in a meeting held February 13 at the National Palace with interim President Alexandre, Prime Minister Latortue, Interior Minister Magloire, Chief of Cabinet Brunache, Justice Minister Dorleans, Director General of the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) Bernard, CEP President Mathurin and two other CEP members, UNDP's Guindo, SRSG Valdes, the ambassadors of Canada, France, Chile and Brazil, and the American Charge. Preval said Alexandre and Latortue expressed the need to hold a free, fair and transparent election that respected the will of the Haitian people, but they were concerned about the situation in the streets. He shared their concern. Preval, however, underscored that if results are published in their current state (note: with him having less than the fifty percent plus one vote to avoid a run-off. end note.), then L'Espwa would legally contest. He stressed, "If we contest, the Haitian people will contest." Preval said he would wait until after analyzing the vote count, but that L'Espwa did not agree with the results and offered to those present serious arguments to voice their doubts.

#### Protest Intelligently and Respect Others

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¶5. (U) Preval said that in consultation with the CEP and MINUSTAH authorities, he would speak with the Haitian people. Switching to Haitian Creole, Preval told the cameras, "This is not my battle. It is the battle of the Haitian people. Haitians are frustrated." He then asked that partisans respect private property, order (freedom for traffic to circulate), and the rights of others. He said no one had the

right to block the roads. Preval added that if people could not get to work, if industry was halted, if students could not go to school, then L'Espwa would become isolated and lose the support and sympathy of the international community. He repeated this same message three times. Preval said, however, that he was not trying to discourage partisans from continuing their protest; rather, he urged that they do so "intelligently," peacefully while respecting the rights of others. Preval also warned partisans to remain vigilant against "professional provocateurs who want to paint L'Espwa as the violent party." Preval said the population must create a political force to carry him to a final victory. Preval shared that he had discussed the situation with UNSYG Annan late on February 13.

¶6. (SBU) Preval took no questions and only made vague reference to the idea of a commission that could investigate the final results of the February 7 presidential election. CEP President Mathurin told Poloff February 14 that CEP members Duchemin and Pradel would sit on this commission that included IGOH members and L'Espwa representatives, but that it was unclear to Mathurin what if anything it is to do. Preval has not yet accepted the idea of such a commission. Separately, MINUSTAH officials report that the 20 employees who showed up to continue vote tabulation at SONAPI were sent home and there is no activity taking place.

¶7. (C) Comment: There are already signs that the population took heed of Preval's words calling for respect of public order. Unfortunately, Preval's ardent contestation of the results and his insistence on the right to protest appear to be sending mixed signals. Final presidential results have not yet been determined and it is unlikely any will be made public until statistical questions are addressed. Presumed second-place finisher Lesly Manigat indicated to the Canadian Ambassador and other interlocutors February 12-13 that he fully intends to pursue a run-off March 19. Finally, as stories circulating about IRI's role in the resignation of Aristide have dissipated, Preval's references to NDI's "international results" showing a first-round Preval victory may instigate deeper inspection into the role of NED's partners trying to advance democracy in Haiti. NDI is

reportedly meeting with Preval February 14 to explain that their count did not include blank or spoiled ballots and that all candidates' votes would be reduced proportionally. NDI told DCM that its local partner will issue a press release describing the count and its methodology. End comment.  
CARNEY